Tommy Johnson

Program

The Tubadours (playing outside)
Euphoniums: Loren Marsteller, Monique Churchill;
Tubas: Doug Tornquist, Fred Greene

America the Beautiful - Samuel Ward
Trumpet: Dylan Bellusci; Euphonium: Daniel Bellusci; Piano: Roberta Garten

From My Homeland - Bedrich Smetana
For Violin & Piano
Violin: Anne-Marie Johnson; Piano: Roberta Garten

A Tribute to Uncle Tommy - André Mieux
For Solo Piano
Piano: André Mieux

Uncle Tommy has always been an inspiration to me for a lot of special reasons: as a talented musician, a kind and helpful relative, and an honest and loving individual. He was truly a wonderful role model. I dedicate this original composition to him as a proud member of his extended family.

The Swan - Saint-Saens
Cello: Thomas Johnson; Piano: Roberta Garten

Keystone Chops - Lennie Niehaus
UCLA Tuba Quartet
Euphoniums: Jennifer Jester, Carl Berdahl;
Tubas: Luke Diebolt, Zack Van Pelt

How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place - comp. Brahms, arr. Elwood Williams
USC Trombone Ensemble - Conductor: Terry Cravens;
Tenor trombones: Alexandra Zacharella, Lee Allen, Stephanie Waidelich, Isa Robinson, Christian Goldsmith, Noah Gladstone, Oh Tae Kwon, Matt Karatsu, Nicole Wisneskie, Justin Toomey, Shelly Suminski, Misha Lubko;
Bass trombones: Fuchou Chiang, Callan Milani

Dual School Duel - comp./arr. Steven James Taylor

Take Me Out to the Ball Game - arr. Brad Warnaar
For Double Brass Sextet
Conductor: Steven James Taylor;
Sextet 1 - The Dodger Dogs - Trumpets: Gary Grant, Wayne Bergeron; French Horn: Joseph Meyer; Trombone: Alex Isles;
Bass trombone: Phillip Teele; Tuba: Randy Jones
Sextet 2 - The Sports Dodgers - Trumpets: Rick Baptist, Warren Luening; French horn: Rick Todd; Trombone: Charlie Loper;
Bass trombone: Bill Reichenbach; Tuba: John Van Houten

Dual School Duel is a short piece for two dueling brass sextets that draws its inspiration from aspects of Tommy's life and character. His love of sports and lightly irreverent sense of humor are highlighted here by pitting two fight songs against each other in a contrapuntal tug-of-war. The song "Fight On" of USC (where Tommy taught and attended), goes up against the song "Sons of Westwood" of UCLA (where he also taught, and sometimes cheered). Things get nasty, but end up in a twisted yet triumphant coexistence.

Take Me Out to the Ball Game - Some years ago, our musical world was saddened by the loss of Arthur Maebe, a wonderful - and wonderfully colorful - French horn player. As Art was such a huge baseball fan, it was decided that a special arrangement of "Take Me Out To the Ballgame" should be played at his memorial service. This was done, and the tuba player for the occasion was none other than Arthur's close friend and fellow baseball fanatic, Tommy Johnson. We have decided it would be appropriate to honor Tommy's memory by reprising that performance, this time rearranging it a bit to feature the tuba. So here it is, Tommy, and well, as you would say, "GO DODGERS!"

Canzona Seconda - comp. Giovanni Gabrielli, arr. Tommy Johnson
USC Tuba Master Class - Conductor: Norman Pearson;
Tubas: Zach Collins, Chris Miller, Steven Caron, Daniel Safford, Andy Green, Greg Koprowski, Phillip Herrera, Laura Potter, David McLemore, Jon Hansen

About the Artists

March from 1941 - comp. John Williams, arr. Todd Fiegel
Combined USC/UCLA Tuba/Euphonium Ensemble
Conductor: Jim Self; Euphoniums: Carl Berdahl, Jennifer Jester, William Baker, Shelly Suminsky, Alex Zarcharella, Noah Gladstone, Lee Allen; Tubas: Zach Collins, Chris Miller, Steven Caron, Daniel Safford, Andy Green, Greg Koprowski, Phillip Herrera, Laura Potter, David McLemore, Jon Hansen, Luke Diebolt, William Plenk, Zach Van Pelt, Marshall Voit; Percussion: Professor Erik Forrester, Daniel Kaminski, Yuri Inoo, Jessica Cameron, Erik Ohlson, Sidney Hopson

Variations on a Sonata - Bruce Broughton
For Double Brass Quartet and Tuba
Solo Tuba: Gene Pokorny; Trumpets: Malcolm McNab, Jon Lewis, Dave Washburn, Larry Hall; Horns: Brian O'Connor, Steve Becknell; Trombones: Bill Booth, Terry Cravens

Variations on a Sonata, composed for double brass quartet and tuba, is based upon the themes of the tuba sonata composed for Tommy, a piece which since its premiere has found its way into the mainstream tuba recital repertoire and is familiar to many tuba players worldwide. The piece begins and ends with the theme from the slow movement, a cantabile aria. The center of the piece intermingles some of the themes from the first and third movements, relying most notably on the insistent motive that begins the sonata.

The Trumpet Shall Sound - Handel
For Brass Quintet and Bass-baritone solo
Solo: Paul Shivers

Winter Wonderland - arr. Joey Sellers
Los Tubas 24-tet
Conductor: Jim Self

Fanfare for a Big Man - Jim Self

Finale from Symphony #4 - comp. Peter Tchaikovsky, arr. Jim Self
Mass Tuba/Euphonium Choir
Conductor: Jim Self

Dylan Bellusci (9 years old)
Dylan is the son of our daughter, Jennifer. He loves the trumpet and performing. He is in the 4th grade.

Daniel Bellusci (11 years old)
Daniel is Dylan's older brother. He has played euphonium for 1 month. Grandpa gave him one lesson. Daniel also loves to perform.

Anne-Marie Johnson (15 years old)
Anne-Marie is the daughter of our son, Keith and his wife Christine. They all live in Melbourne, Australia where Anne-Marie studies with Alice Waten.

André Mieux (20 years old)
André is the son of Tommy's niece Donna Mieux and Grandson of Alma Troy - Tommy's sister. He lives in San Dimas and studied with Dr. Chen.

Thomas Johnson (17 years old)
Thomas is Anne-Marie's older brother. He also lives in Melbourne with his family. His principal teacher has been Rosie Hunt.

Paul Shivers
Paul is the son of Tommy's sister, Almita. He lives in Anaheim and enjoys hobbies of singing and playing the trombone and guitar.

Steven James Taylor (narrator)
Stephen is Tommy's nephew, the son of Tommy's sister, Jane Taylor and her husband Jim Taylor. Steve is a successful composer in Los Angeles.

John Thomas Johnson

was born January 7th, 1935, to Alma and Thomas Johnson. He was soon called by his middle name and, for the next 71 years, he became "Tommy" Johnson. He had four sisters. Lucille Marie, a teacher and missionary, was the oldest - 14 years older than Tommy. Jane, who was also a teacher, was eight years older. The twins Almita, a physical therapist, and Alma, a court reporter and executive secretary, were seven years older. All four sisters were UCLA graduates. In addition to their four children, Tommy's family often shared their home with their famous first cousin, Dr. Ralph Johnson Bunche, who later became a diplomat, civil rights leader, and the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

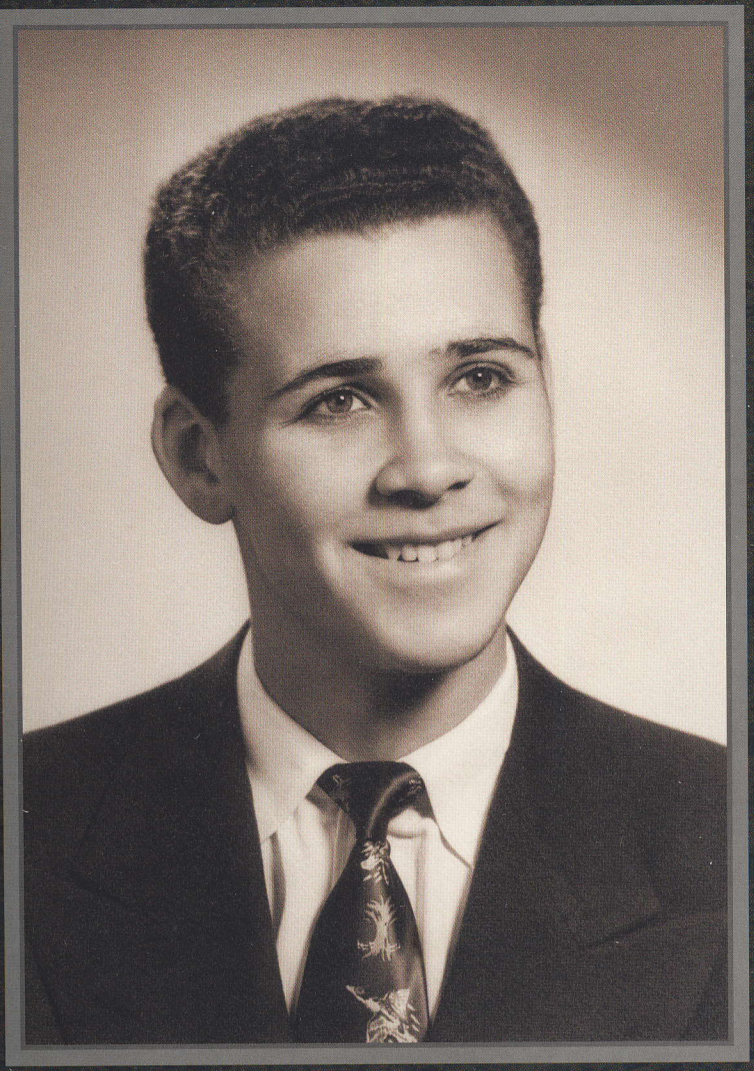
Alma Johnson taught her children that there was almost nothing they could not do if they worked hard enough. Imbued with their parents' work ethic, the children followed their mother's mantra: "Good, better, best - never let it rest until your good is better, and your better, best." The family believed in and lived by the basic moral values of honesty, self-discipline, respect, thrift and hard work. They believed in the value of education and job training, the beauty of music and in spiritual inspiration.

Sunday in the Johnson family was dedicated to church. In fact, the family attended two churches on Sunday. In the morning, they went to Lincoln Memorial near their home. In the afternoon and evening, they attended the Angeles Temple. It was at Angeles Temple that Tommy had his first instrumental music experiences. Tommy's father, who had

a fantastic voice, was the baritone soloist at the Temple so Tommy was directly and often exposed to church music. Angeles Temple had an excellent Orchestra and Band. Tommy excelled at trumpet by the time he was eight years old. He wanted to join the band at Angeles Temple but was told there were too many trumpets. However, he was assured that he could join the band if he could play the tuba. He said, "Sure!" and immediately took up the E-flat tuba. The rest is history.

Tommy was a child of the depression, which of course impacted his value system and concept of money and its use. He was never without a job and had many jobs throughout his life. His first job was delivering newspapers, then clerking in a dry goods store, making tires at the Goodyear rubber plant, and delivering mail. Throughout his life, he was exceptionally generous to everyone but he, himself, lived humbly and frugally. Until recent years, he changed the oil in his car, made and repaired household objects in his shop and enjoyed purchasing at discount!

Going through school, Tommy excelled in two things in addition to his studies. He was recognized by everyone at Foshay Junior High and at Manual Arts High School both for his tuba playing and for his skill in basketball. He was an all-star in basketball at Manual Arts High sharing the spotlight with classmate and teammate at both Manual Arts and USC, the future USC Football Hall-of-Famer and NFL Pro-Bowler, Jon Arnett. Tommy also swam on the Manual Arts swim team.



Tommy's only private music teacher was the world-renowned trombone player, Robert Marsteller. Tommy won a $100 PTA music scholarship as a 9th grader at Foshay Junior High, and was assigned to Mr. Marsteller as a student. At his first lesson, he discovered that his teacher did not play the tuba, but that he was the principal trombone with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The $100 bought him 20 lessons at $5.00 per lesson. After his 20 lessons were completed there was no money for more instruction. Mr. Marsteller said, "No problem. You can cut my lawn every week and I'll give you lessons." After cutting that grass for nearly four years, Tommy graduated from high school and entered USC. From the many music scholarships offered to him from major universities, Tommy chose USC primarily to continue his studies with Mr. Marsteller, who was a professor of music at the school. Many times in future interviews and articles, Tommy stated that Robert Marsteller was the greatest influence on him in his music career.

After graduation from Manual Arts High, Tommy was offered scholarships in both basketball and music. Luckily, he chose the music scholarship, especially given that soon into his USC basketball career he seriously injured a knee, thereby ending his athletic career. But his music career at USC became legend. From his entry as a student through his career as an SC professor of music, Tommy became one of USC's most respected and honored Trojans for nearly 55 years.

Tommy's first studio experience was with David Raksin. Mr. Raksin had been at USC while Tommy was a student there. David Raksin asked Robert Marsteller if he knew anyone who could play challenging tuba parts. Marsteller said, "Absolutely! You know Tommy." Raksin replied, "Yeah, I know how well he plays." And from that day until two weeks before his death, Tommy Johnson became one of history's most successful performers in the highly competitive music industry. "Al Capone" was the first film in which Tommy played.

After his graduation from USC as a music education major in 1956, Tommy began his career as a Junior High School Music Educator. He taught band, orchestra, string class and beginning winds. He began teaching at Dana Junior High in San Pedro (1956-1960), then taught at Sepulveda Junior High from 1960 to 1979. He taught at USC from the early 1960s until the present. He also taught at UCLA from the early 1970s until a couple of weeks before his death.

In 1957, Tommy, after meeting her at USC, married Patricia "Pat" Lehman, a USC music major. Pat Johnson herself has become a celebrated studio and orchestral musician, whose violin can be heard in thousands of films and recordings, as well as in many live performance venues such as the Hollywood Bowl and Greek Theater. Pat and Tommy were married for 49 years. From this marriage came four children: Keith Thomas, Susan Patricia, Michael John, and Jennifer Joy.

Keith graduated from Indiana University and is now a professional cellist. He moved to Australia 25 years ago where he married Christine Lockwood, a fine violinist. They are both highly regarded members of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in Australia. Keith and Christine have three children. Thomas Francis, 17, is a gifted cellist and computer wiz. Anne-Marie, 15, is an excellent violinist, athlete and linguist who recently won her state's competition in French and is now seeking the Australian national title. David William, 13, is a cellist, flautist and guitarist.

Tommy Johnson and his family of tubaists

Jennifer	Michael	Susan	Keith
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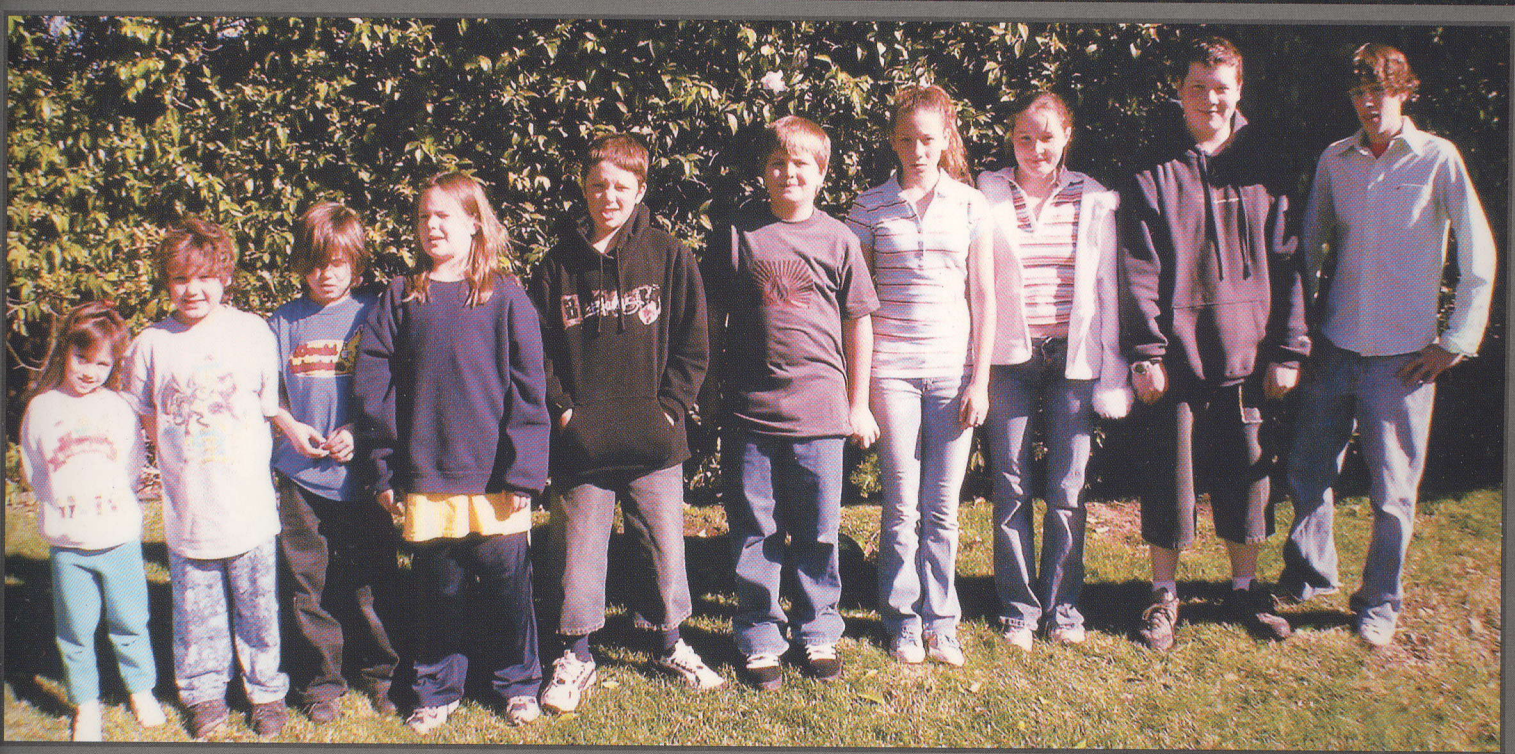
Susan Patricia attended USC for two years as a bassoon major. She then transferred to CSUN as a business/accounting major, where she received her B.A. in business/accounting and soon after was certified as a Certified Public Accountant. She then earned an M.A. in accounting with a concentration in taxation. She is now a senior tax manager working at an accounting firm in Westlake, California. She has two children. Samual Ray, 18, a tubist, who is now a freshman architecture major at Rice University. Jaclyn Michelle, 16, is a violinist, clarinetist, guitarist and a perennial all-star soccer player.

Michael John Johnson attended CSUN as a film major then transferred to Arizona State, graduating with

an M.S. Mike played trumpet at a professional level in high school and college, but elected the business world over music. At present, he is director of business development for a financial services company in Phoenix. He is also a triathlete. His children include Ryan Michael, 14, a tubist and computer enthusiast, and his daughter, Jessica Lee, 12, a saxophonist, cross-country runner and soccer queen. Mike is engaged to Lana Jacobson who has a daughter, Marisa, age seven.

Jennifer Joy graduated from the Eastman School of Music with a B.A. in violin performance. She also holds an M.A. in Spiritual Psychology. Jennifer has been a member of several orchestras and ensembles in New York and Los Angeles. She is now teaching violin and working with musicians as a performance coach. She has two children. Daniel Thomas, 11, is a black belt in karate and is accomplished on the piano, violin and the baritone euphonium, as well as being a video game enthusiast. Dylan David, 9, is a scientist, violinist, construction expert and budding trumpeter.

For several generations, the entire large Johnson family has excelled in music. The family was the subject of a wonderful article in Reader's Digest magazine that detailed the history of music in the family dating back to a great grandmother in Detroit. To this day, during the Holiday season, dozens of Johnson descendants gather to perform orchestral music together, both delighting and motivating the next generation in the family to "make your good better, and your better best."



Tommy played under the batons of our world's greatest orchestral conductors, participated in the development of thousands of movies, concerts and staged events, and contributed to our listening easure as he accompanied uncountable recording artists from Elvis Presley and Weird Al Yankovic through Sinatra, ancini and Striesand. Tommy even appeared in a movie as a horseman. However, his acting career was cut short when s horse decided to leave the script by leaping into reverse and retreating wildly out of control while the rest of the rmy stormed ahead and conquered he castle! In summary, his career as performer placed him at the heights f success. Yet, today, in a concurrent ut unseen heaven, Tommy Johnson ts on a very special cloud, albeit very thick and strong cloud, cknowledged by the Heavenly Father, ot so much for his music, but for the reatest accomplishment of his life side from the wonderful family he urtured - that is, his accomplishments s a teacher of young teenagers, niversity students, and accomplished rofessional musicians.

Tommy Johnson was undoubtedly he most successful secondary school nusic teacher Los Angeles has ever nown. Beginning in 1956, he taught rchestral music for five years at Dana unior High in San Pedro. He then aught for the next 20 years at Sepulveda Junior High. Any observer would agree that Tommy's classroom at Sepulveda, Room 9, was the most organized classroom ever seen. The room environment was bright and motivating. The procedures were efficient at every level. And, the instructional strategies used were perfection itself. The result was that period after period, year after year, seventy-five to one hundred highly motivated and smiling students left Room 9 each hour proud hat they were members of the large district's most celebrated music program. So many of those students have achieved

the highest levels of accomplishment in their chosen fields, be they educators, musicians, business people, doctors, psychologists, clergymen, and those most notable amongst us - the soccer moms.

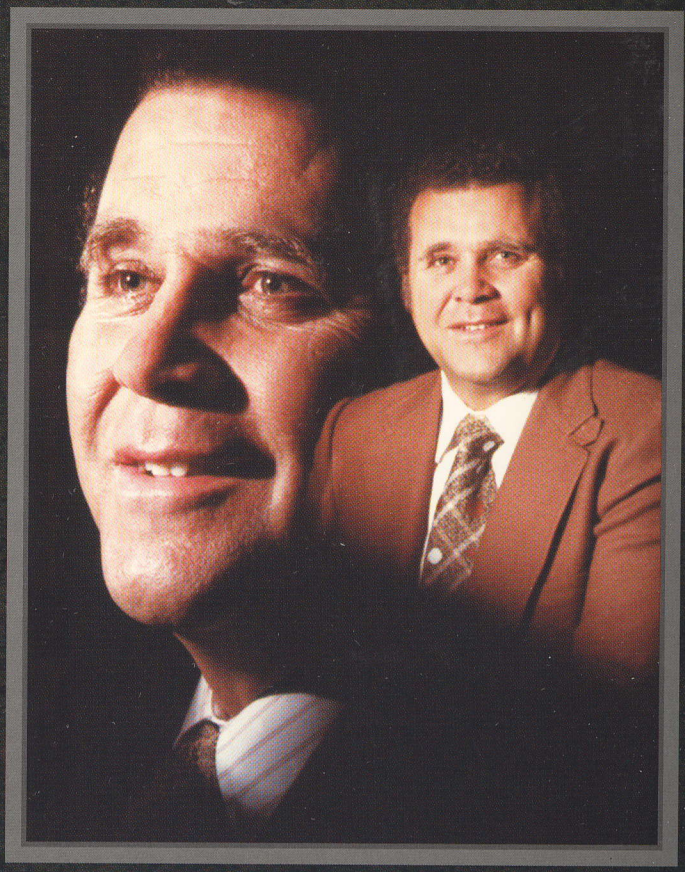
Under Tommy's baton, students went from elementary school music to accomplished mid-level orchestral musicians. The performances of the Sepulveda Junior High "Conquistador" orchestra were always the highlight of each semester at the school. Tommy's groups performed citywide for district meetings attended by thousands of people. Often, the Sepulveda orchestra was invited to play at welcoming events for famous political figures and dignitaries who were arriving in Los Angeles. And each year they captured first prize in the district's annual music festivals and competitions. For his excellence as a teacher, Tommy received innumerable awards, certificates, plaques and honors.

Because of his excellence, Tommy Johnson was asked to be a Master Teacher for dozens of aspiring music educators from USC, UCLA, CSUN and Cal Arts. Those teachers today are carrying on his legacy, each striving to achieve the high standards set for them by their famous Master Teacher.

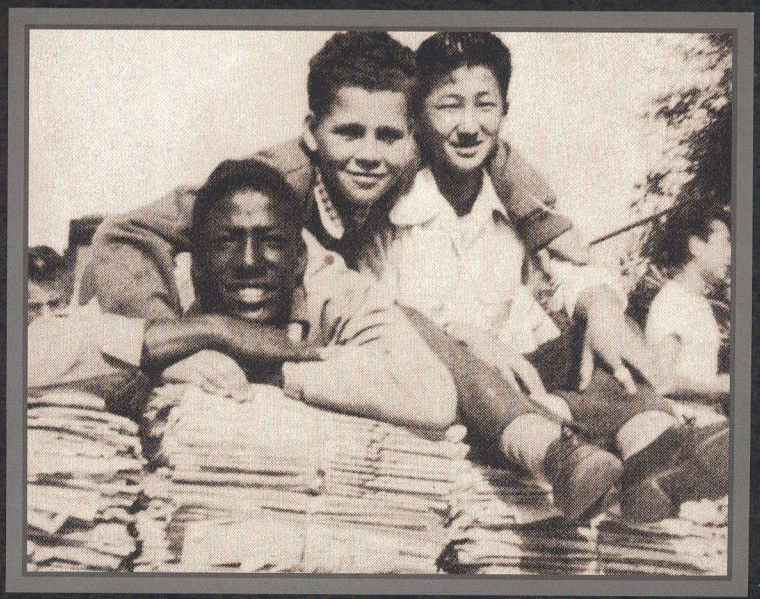
Tommy was not just a "regular" teacher. He was spirited and active in many faculty extra-curricular activities ranging from the faculty basketball team to the daily ping-pong tournaments. These latter events became so intense he once slammed the door on an understanding principal who had merely wanted to tell him and Mr. Walbert that the bell had rung and 110 students were standing in the hall waiting for their class to begin ten minutes late!

In addition, Tommy was the fair-haired boy of the school's PTA. For over a decade, his homeroom succeeded in winning the school's annual PTA membership competition. While most teachers struggled to produce 100 percent in memberships, Tommy's "Homeroom 9" always produced well into the thousands of percent in memberships. The faculty admired his ability to motivate students to solicit memberships until some musically knowledgeable teacher determined that a significant number of those memberships belonged to the entire L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as the roster of the local studio musician's union! So, year after year on PTA reward day, Tommy returned to his home with pizza sauce dribbled onto his shirt and tie, shoes and coat!

Today, many schools fly banners pronouncing themselves as "Schools of Excellence", or "Distinguished Schools." Sepulveda Junior High never needed a banner pronouncing itself as superior. Everyone in the city knew that Sepulveda was the district's most prominent middle school. It was easy to understand why. The school had the district's highest test scores, the lowest incidents of misbehavior, the highest attendance rates, and, of course, the State's most recognized junior high school orchestra.



On some very quiet Sunday evening, just after dusk, slowly walk the silent campus at Sepulveda Junior High. In the solemn silence you will feel the presence of personalities that are imbedded deeply into the spirit of the place, personalities that made the school great - Doyle, Walbert, Torbett, Phillips and Albini, Macanich, Sharp, Peterson, Macaluso, Evans, Whitaker, D. Johnson, Hiljus, Mortensen, Sayer, Buxkemper, Weinberg - and so many others. And resounding among all of those names that once contributed to the school's perfection, you will feel the remarkable presence of Tommy Johnson, the greatest "Conquistador" of us all.



Remembering Tommy

To honor Tommy on the occasion of his 70th birthday, Jim Self, Gene Pokorny, Ron Davis and Norm Pearson organized a "memory book", and presented it to him at the Johnson home. It was made up of notes and pictures from friends, colleagues, and former and current students. Many of the remembrances included in this program were excerpted from those notes, and are indicated by an "MB" in parentheses next to the contributor's name. Also included in these pages are tributes written following Tommy's passing, as well as excerpts from interviews he gave over the years.

You are a living example of how an incredibly successful player can be a wonderful person. You are an amazing role model. I will never be able to thank you for what you have done for me, especially over the last three years. But I do want to send my deepest love and respect to you and Pat. My life would have been so boring without being an honorary tubist!

Roberta Garten (MB)

When I think of Tommy Johnson, the first thing that comes to mind is not "the legend", or any of his countless contributions to the musical realm (and he is, indeed, all you've heard and read about in those regards!). The first things that come to my mind are the man that always had a kind greeting for everybody; the man that would generously give you anything if it would be any kind of benefit to you; the good-natured man who would just as soon talk sports, good food, life or other things as much as tell you what you sounded like in your lesson; the man who would always be the first to offer encouragement in a plain, honest, constructive manner when it was most needed; the curious man who was constantly learning new things; the ever-positive optimist who never hinted at any discontent and lived his life humbly. Tommy is proof that it is possible to be an outstanding professional as well as a devoted family man, a gentleman and a stand-up citizen. It's who he is that makes the biggest impression. And then... then I consider everything he accomplished and realize what a truly remarkable figure he is in the musical world. He was a good example in everything he did, and I say a quick "thanks" for letting Tommy Johnson be with us when he was.

Stephen Oberheu

There are not enough words to describe the feelings I have for you. From the first lesson I had in the summer of 1971 right up until today, I continue to learn from you. For about 30 years now, on Monday nights, we have taught the USC Master Class together. When you are leading the class, I am still amazed at your memory, knowledge of music and the tuba, and I still learn from you.

You have been a mentor, friend and colleague for more than half my life. I can never repay you for giving me the chance to work in Los Angeles. From Taxi Driver to Star Trek #1 and on, some of my most memorable moments in the studios were doing the dozens of two tuba movies we did together. Hearing you play next to me has always been a lesson in good musicianship and powerful tuba playing.

You are also a good man, a good father and friend to so many. To me you are a mixture of those things and a big brother who filled a need in my life. My life has been immeasurably better for knowing you. Like everyone else, I am amazed at the strength you have shown in overcoming your health problems. There is a lesson in that too. In the history of the studios you will be remembered as the best. In your teaching you will be remembered as the best.

Jim Self (MB)

Afterword...

The last few weeks have turned my life upside down. Tommy Johnson was the most dominant male figure in my whole life. For 35 years we were practically connected at the hip. Tommy was a Big Man - in all the definitions of those words: he was big in size, had a big sound on the tuba, liked big cars, big gigabyte computers, big athletes, had a big heart and liked superlatives in everything. His world was a big one that encompassed all around him and his self-confidence rubbed off on everyone. For me it will be much harder living without the strength of that Big Man.

Jim Self

One of the biggest perks of being a director here at Pixar is going down to L.A. to watch the recording sessions for a film's soundtrack. There's one moment in particular that never gets old for me. Randy Newman decides the cue they'll start the session with, and everyone flips through the score that has just been handed out. The musicians have never seen this music before, but they crack open the pages, Randy raises his baton, and...they start playing the piece exquisitely. Just like that. I'm in awe of the talent of these musicians, some of the very finest in the world, who I'm proud to count as my friends.

Tommy was one of those amazing artists, and it was a privilege to have had the skill and emotion of his playing in the music for our films. Tommy played on all of our soundtracks and he was one of the musicians I'd always search out to say hello to (he knew when I was coming, too - he always wore a Hawaiian shirt on the days I came to the recording). He had a great smile and such a warm personality; he was like a teddy bear playing a tuba.

I'll miss seeing Tommy's smiling face in the tuba section the next time I walk into the Sony orchestra stage - but I know he'll be there. He'll always be playing on our soundtracks in spirit.

John Lasseter

Tommy was a fixture in studio orchestras for as long as I can remember. It's almost unimaginable to me that we won't be working with him again. Musicians all over the world admired and respected him. He was a great artist, and the fact that he lent his artistry to recording music for motion pictures, television and records has been a wonderful privilege for all of us who work in those fields. I'll miss him.

Randy Newman

On the picture Last Knight with Jerry Goldsmith, Tommy had just gotten his new cimbasso and asked if he could use it. He told Jerry it was an Italian instrument. After a few cues, Jerry said, "Tommy are you using that Italian thing?" "Yes." "Well don't." On another date at Disney Studios, Tommy thought (as he often did) that there wasn't enough tuba in the mix. After lunch he went into the control room and moved the slider for the tuba up almost all the way. For the rest of the day, all you could hear on the playbacks was the tuba. No one heard the difference, which we laughed about all day. Tommy was a monster tuba player, the King Kong of the tuba. I will miss him and his sound. He was a great help to me and I loved and respected him. He will be missed I'm sure by all who knew him.

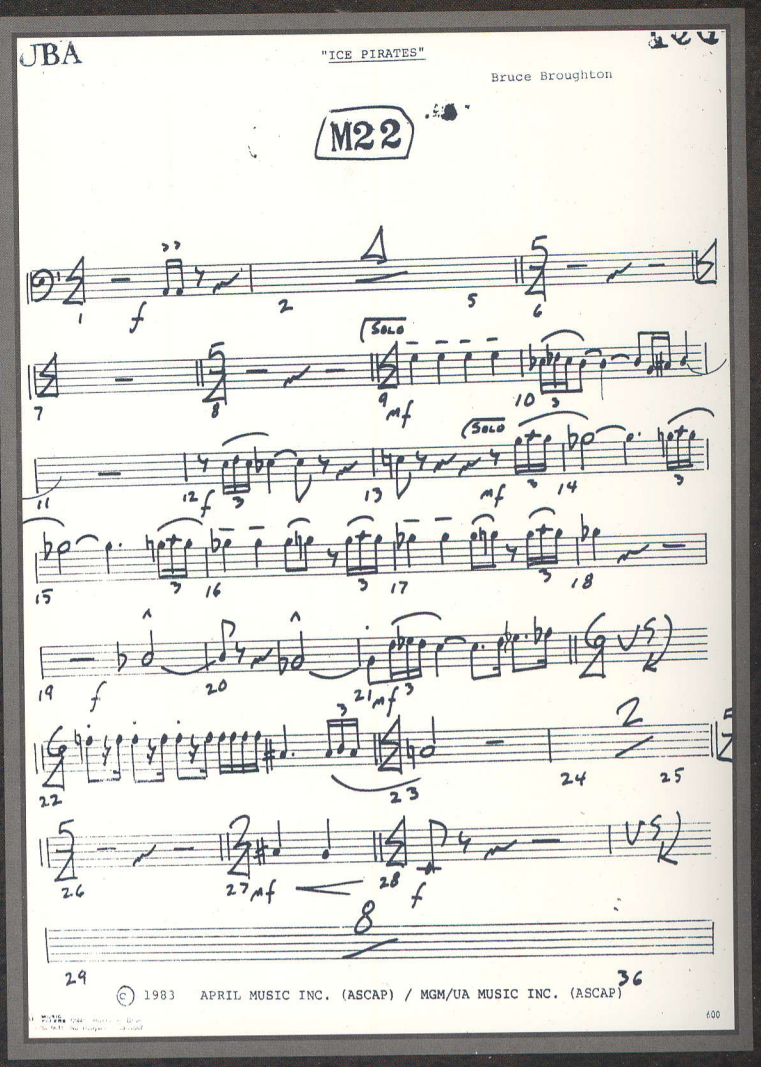
Phil Teele

Tommy and I premiered my tuba sonata during an evening recital at Cal State Northridge. The program, of course, had a lot of music for the tuba to play other than the premiere. I don't remember any other piece except for the sonata, but what I do remember was that Tommy, true to form, had taken on a double session for a movie that day. Most people would back off a little before a big recital, but Tommy hated turning down work and figured he'd be okay for the evening. By the time he got to the recital hall, however, his jaw was getting a little stiff and was beginning to lock. He of course told me about it with that little laugh he had that could mean a lot of different things depending upon the situation. Sometimes it was a wry laugh; sometimes it was because something had actually struck him funny; but sometimes it was because he was a little embarrassed or worried. This was one of those times.

I don't remember many details of the evening, including whether we shared the event with someone else. I do remember, however, going backstage more than once and watching Tommy rub his jaw, saying that he was really having a problem playing. The closer we got to my piece, the more he rubbed his jaw, and the more I worried. And naturally, there was that laugh.

But, as usual, when he finally got to my piece, he played it as though it had been the first thing of the evening. I think he really was tired and I think his jaw really was locking up. But I also think he just liked to see me sweat a little, not really doubting that he'd play the piece somehow.

Years ago, Tommy liked to carry a little Sony Walkman cassette recorder into sessions. He'd place it under his seat with a microphone pointed towards the rest of the orchestra. I think the idea was that he would be able to hear himself in the mix. He often complained about mixers not getting enough tuba onto the track, so I guess he figured that this way he'd at least be able to hear what he had played. In spite of the amateur setup, however, he sometimes got a pretty good sound.



One day he was playing one of his surreptitious recordings for some of the other brass players through some little speakers he had hooked up. As everyone was standing around listening, the composer walked over towards the group while complaining to the scoring mixer about the recording. "What I want..." the composer said, and then he heard Tommy's playback. He looked towards the group and pointed to the little cassette recorder Tommy was holding. "What I want is a recording that sounds like that!"

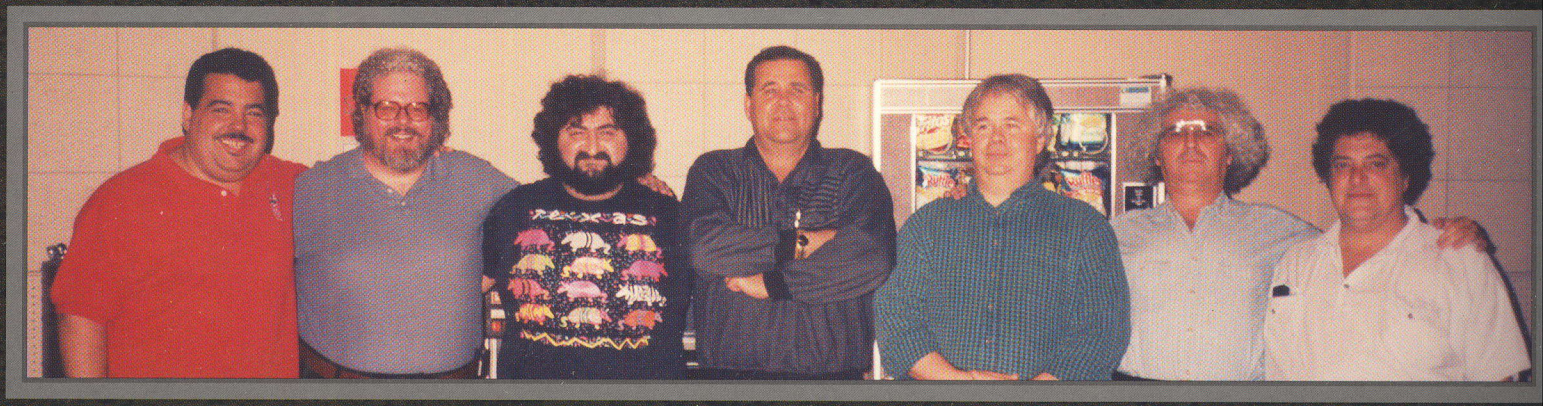
Tommy occasionally subbed for Roger Bobo in the Philharmonic. For one concert he performed a new orchestral piece by a well-known American composer who was in attendance. Tommy looked at the tuba part. It was very low and fast in a loud declamatory style. It had been written too low to sound very effective, so without saying anything, Tommy simply played it an octave higher. After the performance, the composer ran up to him backstage, raving about the way he'd played the tuba part. "I've never heard it played so well!" the composer gushed. "Did you tell him what you did?" I asked him afterwards. "No," he laughed. "Well, you should have," I said. "Now the composer will think the part's okay." I don't think Tommy minded that at all.

Bruce Broughton

Tommy was like a father and a big brother to me as he was to many young L.A. brass players. Many times we relied upon his wisdom in matters ranging from career advice to how to use our computers. He was a true friend to all of us.

His importance in the music world cannot be overstated. He brought tuba playing to an entirely new level. Starting with his first movie score in the early 1960s, he went on to become the most recorded tuba player in history. Students have strived to emulate his beautiful, rich and lyrical sound and style of playing. They are sprinkled throughout the world playing with major orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the New York Philharmonic.

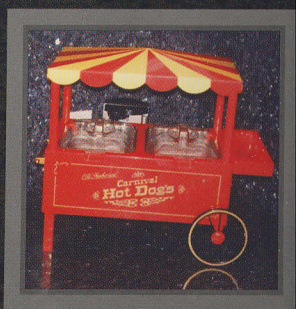
We had so much fun - so many laughs over the years! There was a time on one of the "Die Hard" scores when we had been working at Fox for many hours. It was after midnight and we were half asleep. Michael Kamen said that we had to record "Finlandia" as source music. We forgot about it until the movie came out. During that sequence all you could hear was 1st trumpet and tuba accompanied by a few other players. We had no idea how loud it was. It was ridiculous! Oh, how we laughed about that one.



Another time with Michael Kamen was about the tenth hour on "The 3 Musketeers". Tommy had created an elaborate "payback" for a practical joke I had played on him recently. That time he had just said, "When you least expect it, I'll get you!" Sure enough, in the vicinity of midnight or 1:00 a.m., a copyist brought me an unbelievable and unplayable part. Immediately I sensed that it was too ridiculous to not be a joke. I was wrong! When Michael (who was totally in on the bit) called that cue up, he asked me personally to tacet the first read through. I was horrified to realize that all of the meter changes and all of the key changes seemed to line up with what I had on my part. When Michael said, "Malcolm, are you ready?" I replied, "I've gotta go to the restroom!" Tommy had talked the copyist into making up a part that was "beyond extreme", but looked like it should fit with the other parts. When I saw shakes on high Es at the same time that the oboe was playing a soft lyrical solo, I knew finally that something was up.

Also, I don't ever remember anyone in the brass section ever cooking a hot dog - complete with bun - during a take - except once. Tommy had brought his hot dog cooker machine to Fox and set it up next to his chair. It was unbelievable trying to take a breath during that take.

I miss him so much. He left such an incredible legacy. He was a great human being. He was a wonderful husband father and grandfather. He was a master teacher with more successful students than anyone else I know. He was always there for me and many others for advise on music life and of course, his passion - sports. I just know that he is up in heaven with Johnny Audino having it out about some World Series game. One of the good ones with that pair was when Audino wanted to talk about the Lakers game that had already been played. Tommy stopped him with "Don't tell me who won. I don't want to know. I'm taping the game to watch when I get home!" John let a couple of beats go by and replied with that impish smile, "OK", a pause and then, "But you are not going to be happy!"



All of us will miss his presence, but the legacy he left will live on for many, many years.

Malcolm McNab

Tommy became an expert in whatever he put his energies into, and computers were no exception. He was such an aficionado that every new gadget or gizmo that came out, Tommy had to own and upgrade to. Now, as we all have seen, that industry has changes and improvements almost every six months. You can imagine Tommy's stockpile. One of our musician colleagues remarked that he could just hang around Tommy's TRASH BIN and come away with some cutting edge stuff!

In the early 1990s, it was complicated and expensive to "burn" audio CDs. I was certainly not in Tommy's league of computer savvy, but I needed five copies of a demo of a piece I had written, and I had no capability of making them. So I asked Tommy if he could make them. "Sure, come on over," was his reply. When I arrived, I entered the home version of "CompUSA" and Tommy magically made those copies for me.

My birthday was a few months later, and, as a present, he and Pat gave me 50 CD copies of the piece, beautifully labeled and boxed! What an amazingly thoughtful gift and magnitude of giving.

I'm grateful that I had a friend like Tommy in my life, and will miss him greatly.

Bruce Dukov

Tommy's last months with us were quite remarkable, and I was involved in helping him with some of his orthopedic problems. We were in my office discussing doing another epidural spinal injection to help him stand and walk better when the topic turned to my 12-year old son who plays the tuba in middle school. It was another classic example of Tommy's big generous heart to offer to have my son over to his house for a lesson to make sure he was setting his embouchure properly. Here was a man who had to come in using his electric scooter, and yet was still thinking of others and how he could be of help. I am glad I was able to give at least a little back in medical aid to a man who gave so much of himself.

Todd Molnar, MD

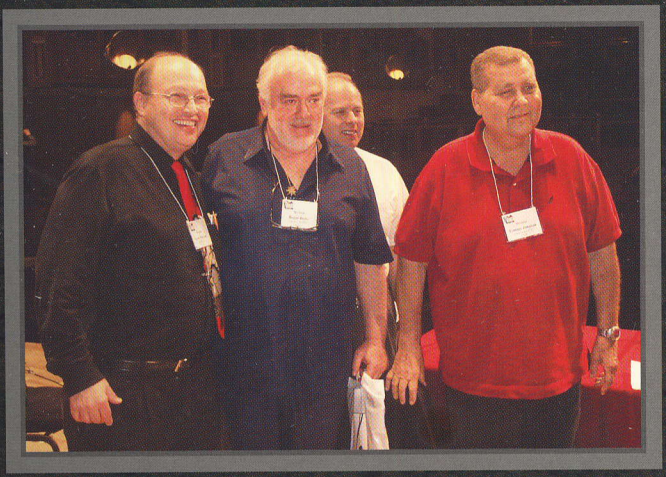
The easy laugh, the electronic gadgets, the hot dogs, the great sound, the cool nerve, the generous advice, the funny stories, and the consistency of performance are just some of the things that come to mind when I think of Tommy.

Bill Reichenbach

Tommy Johnson has been part of my life since about 1984. Even though we only worked together intermittently, he was my go-to guy whenever I needed a tuba player for my polka medleys - in fact, I believe he is the only tuba player I've ever hired. Not only did he blast out that magnificent tuba solo in "Smells Like Nirvana," but we also got to play live together many years ago when I jammed with Frankie Yankovic (no relation) on a polka medley of Grammy-nominated songs. I saw Tommy for the last time earlier this year when he dropped by 4th Street Studio in Santa Monica to supply the tuba part to "Polkarama!", the medley

on my latest CD. Anybody who knows Tommy knows wh a consummate professional he was, as well as an extreme nice, warm, likeable guy. I'm greatly saddened by the loss this wonderful man and incredible musician. My though go out to Tommy's friends, family and loved ones. It was true honor to work with him and I know we all miss hi very, very much.

Al Yankovic



Early this morning, I received the telephone call I hoped I would never get telling me the news that Tommy Johnson had passed on. This is a huge loss to the tuba world, and a deep personal loss to me.

I began studying with Robert Marsteller in 1951. Soon after these lessons began, he told me of another of his students, a wonderful student - his name was Tommy Johnson. As boys, our heroes, of course, were William Bell and Arnold Jacobs. In the early 50s both these men represented the state of the art in tuba playing. I heard William Bell every Sunday afternoon in the weekly New York Philharmonic radio broadcasts, which I never missed, and I listened to Arnold Jacobs and the Chicago Symphony on the spectacular recordings that were beginning to emerge during that period.

Tommy and I quickly became friends, and for more than fifty years, Tommy has been the big brother that I never had and an extraordinary example of a tubist, musician, teacher, and human being. What wonderful luck that my formative years in life could be spent with the influence of a man like Tommy; musically, tubaistically and in life in general he showed me a direction moreso than any other person.

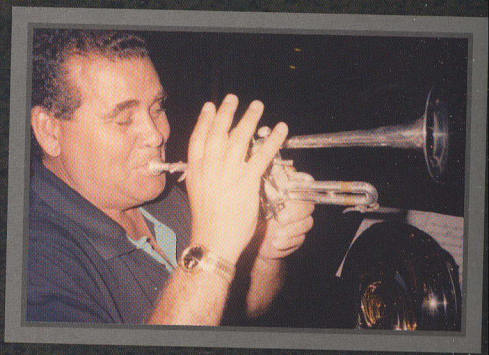
At the same time, we were competitors. Without the competition we shared, I have no doubt whatsoever my musical accomplishments would have fallen far short. To have a friend, a colleague and a competitor like Tommy was a gift.

Through much of the 50s we would meet almost once a week and play duets; I heard extraordinary things in his playing I was not hearing in my own. We talked; we shared thoughts, ideas and discoveries that accelerated the musical growth of both of us. It was as if we were a two-man tuba forum, with questions, and

discussions; perhaps we were the first "tuba chat" group! I grew by learning that this was what competition was all about. It provided the traction and support that enabled us both to move faster and further.

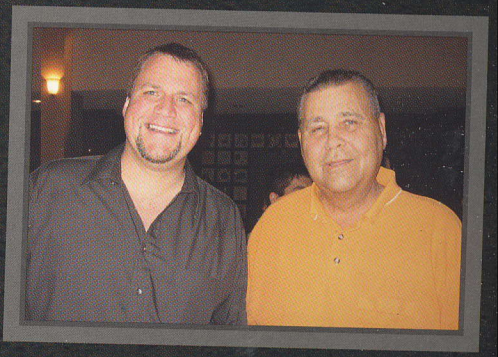
We soon found ourselves frequently working together, from the Disneyland Band to Hollywood studios to the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Of course, when you've worked with someone for that long there are stories to tell. One of my favorites is when he attached his new alarm wristwatch to my tuba where I couldn't see it and it went off during a performance of the second movement of the Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto... and kept beeping for the rest of the performance! When I came off stage Tommy was very eager to "try my tuba"! I didn't find out for a few months that the beeping was Tommy's watch on my tuba.

Tommy, of course, was the most heard tubist in the world, with thousands of films, television shows and recordings. Almost everyone everywhere has heard Tommy play, and what a player he was. However, Tommy's greatness wasn't just as a tubist; he was an extraordinary teacher, evidence of which can be seen and heard in his students, many of whom hold top playing and teaching positions around the world. Perhaps more importantly, though, he was also a truly great man and was an example for me and countless others of wisdom, kindness and character. Everyone who knew him adored him.



I talked to Tommy two days ago. He was clear and humorous, and talked about how when he got out of the hospital he was going to stop playing and go to Arizona and visit his son. He was an example to the end, even showing us how to die.

Saying goodbye to a loved one is so difficult. Tommy Johnson was my best and oldest friend. He was my hero both as a person and as a tubist - I will miss him more that I can say.



Goodbye Tommy, goodbye my dear friend...

Roger Bobo

We were doing a concert in San Diego. On that concert was Rite of Spring. On the way down in a taxicab from the airport, I kept hearing this ringing sound. It was starting to bother me because I thought maybe there was ringing in my ears. Before the concert, I asked someone, "Do you hear that ringing noise?" They're like, "Yeah... what is that?" I thought, "Great... it's not me!"

I had one of these watches with an alarm on it. I looked down at it and put it up to my ear, sure enough it was this watch. The alarm was stuck. This thing was ringing and I couldn't turn it off. So I took the watch off, put it in my pocket and walked backstage. I passed Roger's tuba, saw it sitting there, but he wasn't around. I don't know what made me do this, but I took this watch and put it on his tuba. It was still ringing, but you couldn't hear it because there was so much noise backstage.

So when the concert started, he went onstage for the first number. I was looking through the stage door and I could hear it... "ooooooooo"... and he was looking around like, "What is this noise?!!?" I had clued the trombone players in to what I had done. So he was turning to them, asking if they could hear this soundand they were like, "I don't hear anything."

The last chair bass player sitting right next to Roger heard this noise and thought something was wrong. He put his bass down and went offstage, while the piece was going on, and said to the contractor, "There's this light that's making a buzzing noise. You've got to get that fixed!" The contractor was like, "OK, calm down! We'll get it!"

So the concert went on, they played the whole piece, and you could hear this ringing noise whenever it got soft. I don't think you could hear it in the front... maybe, but I'm not sure. When Roger came offstage, he looked like he was really going nuts! He put his tuba down and went away. I quickly ran over and took the watch off, figuring I'd caused enough trouble already.

I didn't tell him about it until the concert was over. I said, "By the way, that ringing noise... it was this watch!" I pulled it out, and it was still ringing. He told me then, "OK, you've got one coming!" I don't think he ever got even with me. But, I'm sure he'll remember that.

Tommy Johnson (from an interview with Steve Oberheu for TubaNews)

Tommy Johnson and I go back about 45 years, including many activities. Whatever it was, he was tough to beat. In softball, for instance, he would come storming around third, heading for home, sliding feet first - did you ever try to stop a Mack truck? On the golf green, if you had a three-foot putt, he would say, "Get it close." For many years, on Thanksgiving Day, our families would get together for touch football. I would go out for a pass and find myself suddenly on my fanny. I had run into a brick wall - Mr. Johnson. I asked him why he did that, and he said that a block is legal within five feet from scrimmage. Oh! Okay. So I went on defense after that. Applying those characteristics to his tuba playing, again, he was tough to beat - the consummate pro. I was fortunate to have been in the section with him during 75 percent of my work and I was always in awe of his great sound, pitch, power and technique. He made us all sound better. I think the most memorable musical occasion with him, for me, was during the scoring of Jaws. His prowess was astounding - a genius at work. An important added gift from him was that he was always warm, understanding, helpful and in good humor. He was everybody's best friend. I loved him and will miss him greatly.

Dick Nash

It was truly an honor that Tommy was willing to play on my CD, Brass Nation. Meeting him was a thrill, hearing him play was a life-changing experience and getting to talk with him was a privilege. I still get emails from tuba players asking me how on earth I got THE Tommy Johnson to play on my CD. I am so grateful that he did. Very few musicians are able to redefine their instrument. Tommy Johnson did exactly that.

Michael Davis

Tommy - you are the KING! In all our 35 years working together, I always looked up to you as the best of the best. My memories include the many sessions, the L.A. Tuba Quartet, our rides to some early orchestral jobs together - not just for the musical conversations, but for your insights into life, politics and everyday things. I honor your loving commitment to your family, to your students and to your colleagues. You and I worked a lot together and, as a bass trombonist, I simply tried to get inside your huge sound and ride, hopefully adding an extra element. It always seemed to work - you were happy and so was I. We had some very fine musical experiences together and some very funny ones. I will miss you, Tom.

Don Waldrop

We were working together at Universal one day on a call for Stu Phillips. I believe it was for Battlestar Galactica. At one point during the date, Stu announced to the orchestra that he was going to give us a downbeat and we were to play any note we wanted - he was just asking for a cluster effect. While Stu turned away from us for a few seconds, Tommy managed to get word to everyone in the room (about 40 people) to play E natural. The red light came on, Stu gave a big downbeat, and a resounding unison E natural came out. The best part of the whole story is that after everybody including Stu got a big laugh out of it, Stu dictated notes to us so it wouldn't happen again. I'll always remember the way Tommy laughed - I can still hear it today.

Alan Kaplan

Since my first year at USC in 1970, Tommy was the most supportive faculty member of the Trojan Marching Band. He always sent great tuba players to anchor the Band, like Gene Pokorny.

Tommy's favorite Trojan Band story dates back to 1955 when USC played Ohio State in the Rose Bowl. The Trojan Marching Band was dressed as horses and marched the halftime show during a downpour. All Tommy could remember was how their coach, Woody Hayes, was furious that the Trojan Marching Band trashed the field.

Tommy was also supportive of the USC Concert band. He was a feature performer on numerous occasions at our spring concert in the Cerritos Center for Performing Arts. He was a diehard Trojan fan. It always brought me great joy knowing that Tommy was able to insert the infamous Tribute to Troy theme in every one of his recording sessions surreptitiously. I'll never forget him. He was not only a great musician but a great friend and Trojan as well.

Fight on, Tommy.

Art Bartner

I've been incredibly blessed throughout my life to have had wonderful teachers, and I feel very fortunate that you accepted me as a pupil. You encouraged me to push myself. You demanded excellence and challenged me, but always with a great deal of kindness and compassion. I have always been amazed at how much time and effort you give to your students. One would get the impression that teaching is your only job because you are always making copies of music or recordings, lining up accompanists for juries, recording an audition tape, or sequencing an orchestra score. You are truly an inspiration to me because you have successfully managed an incredibly busy performing and teaching career and still found time to raise a family. I have a tremendous amount of respect for your opinions, insights and wisdom.

I really enjoy sitting next to you in the orchestra and I will never let myself forget that I wouldn't be sitting in THAT

tuba chair if it hadn't been for you. You encouraged me to take lessons with Roger Bobo. Back in 1982, you recommended me to play extra with the Philharmonic for the first time and got me on several recording dates. There is no way I would have been able to acquire those kinds of jobs on my own, and I owe you a debt of gratitude for giving me the chance to prove myself. Everyone needs a mentor and you were mine. I hope that I can follow in your footsteps and help some young players get their chances as well. Thank you for everything!

Norm Pearson (MB)

I first met Tommy in the fall of 1973. I was a freshman at USC and living away from home for the first time. Everything was bigger than I had ever been used to - the campus, the class sizes, the marching band and the number of music students. I would wonder how I was going to fit in. Tommy was a faculty member and a big fan of USC. I don't recall the first day we met, but I do recall that he was a big influence right away. I was so impressed by his spirit. He was such a positive influence on anyone who came to him for help, whether they were a tuba student or not. He made it a bit easier to be a new college student. When I found out he was still the music teacher at Sepulveda Junior High, despite his already legendary career as a player and his teaching duties at USC and UCLA, I realized his commitment to helping others was something to respect. He also was a chamber music coach, and that is where I truly felt his influence. I became part of a brass quintet that was fortunate enough to have Tommy as a coach. He always supported us and seemed to have the right thing to say at the right time. We went on to become the first brass quintet in the then 30-year history of the Coleman Competition to win a prize. There was only one division back then for our age group and we would compete against string quartets. We took second place. Our joy in what we had accomplished was great, but so was our pride in seeing Tommy's name on our certificates as our coach. We were honored to have done that for him.

My years as a colleague with Tommy were cherished. A job was always better because he was there. I was fortunate enough to do so many sessions with him that I lost count. I think I heard him play "Tribute to Troy" on every one of them. I never thought I would miss hearing that song. I guess I was wrong. I also taught with him for many years at both UCLA and USC. He was very proud of that. If you knew Tommy, you always felt better about life. He was that rare breed of great artist, great teacher and great person. He was the best of the human spirit and I will always miss him.

Richard Todd

Tommy Johnson was a musical giant and a true gentleman. When I was first getting started in "the business", he treated me not like some kid or interloper but as a colleague. This, as one might imagine, meant the world to me and does to this day. Never having formally studied with him, I nonetheless learned an enormous amount just sitting next to him - about how to play, how to conduct myself and so much more. His love and devotion to his family and friends was inspirational, and his unflagging confidence and support for me, personally, during those rough times which come to us all will never be forgotten! Nor will his tremendous courage and dignity as he fought his own battles and continued to perform with the utmost professionalism. He leaves a truly wonderful family and a legacy of students who carry his principles (both personal and musical) forward from positions in orchestras at every level, in recording studios, in teaching studios and in band and orchestra rooms all over the world.

Tommy's sense of humor was wry and occasionally impish. Having just purchased a new contrabass trombone, I brought it to work one day to show it off to Phil Teele. Phil, Tommy and I were working together on

Elmer Bernstein's score to Wild Wild West (the Will Smith movie). My part was quite low and Phil kept nudging me and whispering repeatedly, "Sell the contra, sell the contra!" So... I asked Mr. Bernstein if he would like to hear the part on the contrabass trombone. He replied, "I don't know, what does a contrabass trombone sound like?" As I was reaching for the instrument to demonstrate, Tommy spoke up, "It sounds like a CIMBASSO!" When all we stopped laughing, I played a pretty good pedal C and the contra was "sold." This memory makes me chuckle to this day.

I count myself lucky having a friend and colleague like Tommy in my life.

Bob Sanders

A few years ago, we had a call for an orchestra to back up a punk band. As we were setting up, the leader explained that members of this band were told by friends, "You can't be punk if you use an orchestra behind you." Because of this uncertainty in their minds, we were asked to stroke the members' egos when they showed up and tell them how good their material was.

There was a full orchestra in the little studio, and the low brass section in the isolation booth was Charlie Loper, Bill Reichenbach, Phil Teele, Mr. Johnson, and me on second tuba/cimbasso. We were a couple of cues into the session when the leader of the band came in and walked up to Mr. Johnson and me and said, "I love the tuba! I was thinking about writing for a big f---ing choir of just tubas; that would be so f---ing rad, man." He was curious about the cimbasso, so Mr. Johnson had me play a few notes so he might consider using it as well in the future. Then he asked, "Hey, did you guys know that in the movie "Close Encounters" they used a tuba for the voice of the mothership? That was sooooo cool, man." I told him that not only did we know that, but that he was talking to the man who was not only involved with that project, but about 2,000-3,000 other movie soundtracks as well. He lit up and yelled to the other members of his band, "Whoa! This is f---ing unbelievable! You know who this guy is? He's the f---ing mothership!" He turned to Mr. Johnson and said, "You are rad, dude. Damn, you are f---ing RAD! This is baddass, you are f---ing rad, man, you are the raddest!!"

He turned away happy and went back with his band, and Mr. Johnson turned to Bill Reichenbach and asked, "What's 'rad' mean?"

Fred Greene

The example you set as a tuba player who was engaged in all aspects of the musical process as a player, private studio teacher and public school ensemble director has been truly inspirational. Equally important is the example you continue to provide of a warm, caring human being

who has incredible personal integrity and continues to care about his students long after they have entered the professional world.

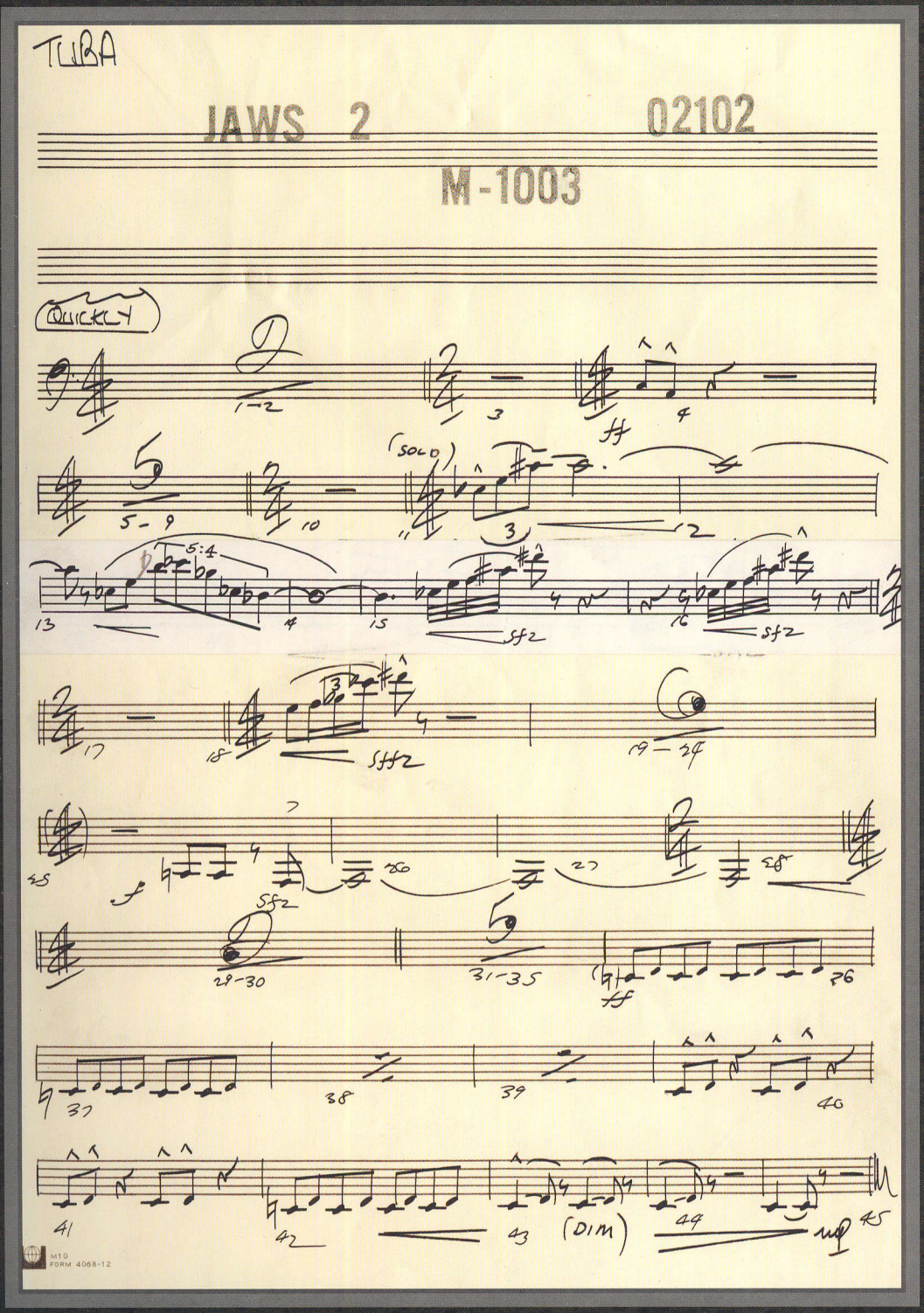
I fondly remember the talks we had about junior high school instruction during the time I was student teaching. It was the invitation to observe at your school when I was so tired of the mediocrity that I was seeing elsewhere that allowed me to continue in the field of music education and eventually become a successful teacher. Believe me, I would not be where I am today, nor would I have been able to create a successful university music education program, had it not been for your influence.

Frank K. Heuser (MB)

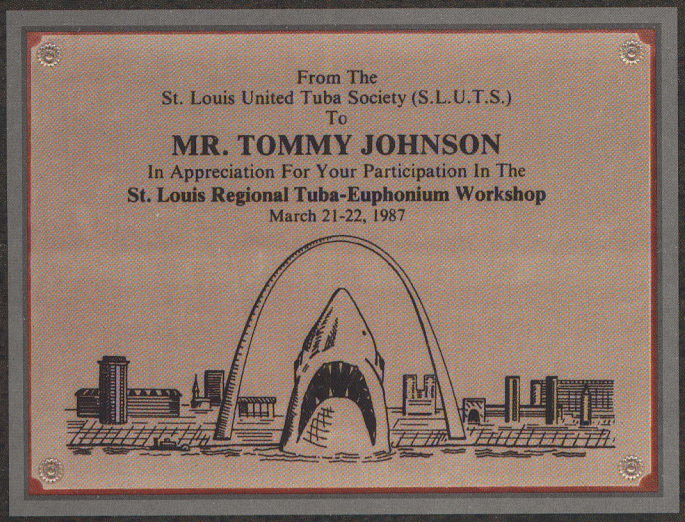
It has always been a gift to play music with or near Tommy. In addition to all of the movies and television shows we worked on, we played in a brass quintet together - what a huge treat that was! Sitting near Tommy was a great lesson in life, as both a player and a person. His sound filled the room and was as solid as a rock. His encouragement was always present and his compliments like, "Very nice, my boy", meant the world to me.

I am honored to have been able to call Tommy my friend, as we all are. I look forward to continuing the stories of the wonderful man, friend, musician and joy that were all the things that made up Tommy. God Bless you, Tommy...

Jon Lewis



I guess one of the most famous/ infamous jobs I've done is Jaws. First of all, that day I was late to the studio because - as you know - I taught public school for many years and mixed that in with studio work. This was one of those days. It was raining and I was waiting for a substitute teacher to arrive. Because of the rain, the substitute teacher was late, so I had to wait longer than I wanted to. By the time I got to the 405 (Freeway) and headed towards Fox (studios), there was a big traffic jam, and I was 30 minutes late to the call. I walked in, and John Williams was on the podium. I realized I had come in through the side door when I should have come in through the back door. I had to squirm my way through through the cello section to get back to the tuba (spot). The whole time John WIlliams was watching me with anticipation. Basically, they were just sort of waiting for me to get my tuba out. I very hurriedly got it out, I was really out of breath. When you're late like that, you're just really all upset. So as I sat down



and barely got the mouthpiece in the tuba, I happened to oper the book and the first cue is this big long tuba solo. And I ca see him with his baton looking back like, "Are you ready?" An I haven't even blown a note. I said, "Ok." (laughter) He started i with the (bum-bum-bum-bum) and this tuba solo, (sings)... well, played it really fine. In those days I had a lip that just responde immediately, I never had to warm up. I never believed in warmin up anyway, so I didn't. Being the age I was at that time, I was i really great shape.

Besides, I was thinking about what was happening at the junio high school while I was playing all this stuff. I had to leave befor the substitute got there, had to call in another teacher, who wa not a music teacher, just to hold down the fort because I said, must leave now. I can't wait any longer." I was preoccupied with little worry so my thoughts were not totally on the music... mayb that was good because I just nailed it every time. Didn't have an trouble playing it. But later on I was thinking, "Hmmm... that coul have been pretty hard." I was only playing CC tuba (Mirafone 185) a the time, and this solo kept recurring in almost every cue. I foun out later that was the theme for the shark. I asked John William later why he wrote that so high for the tuba; why didn't he writ that for the French horns since it was in the perfect range fo them? He said, "Well, I wanted something that was in that registe but I wanted it to sound a little more threatening."

Tommy Johnson (from an interview with Steve Oberheu for TubaNews)

In life and in this business of music, there are many interestin moments, but far too few with men like the gentle giant, Tomm Johnson. It seems truly ironic that nearly twenty years ag someone like me, a musician with only a few years in the fil

business, would have the job of hiring the best musicians in the world, and Tommy was truly one of the best.

Not only was he one of the best, but he was responsible for teaching the best. While working on Fantasia 2000 for Disney, I brought in Tommy along with several others to do a few musical effects for the project. Tommy was to play a small portion of one of the pieces from the film and do a quick fall off to simulate a rehearsal. As he prepared and looked over the music a puzzled look came over his face. The music had come in from the Chicago Symphony. As Tommy checked music, he noticed several notes indicating the best way to perform the piece and oddly, it was exactly as he would have done it. Then he smiled as he realized that one of his past students who had performed with the Chicago Symphony had written the notes. It was just the way Tommy had taught him. Truly Tommy's influence reached across the country as if it was across the room.

He was Tommy Johnson, a master of his instrument, and a legend in his own time. Through that sense of sharing our similarities we became friends and brothers. Of course, as I got to know him my respect for grew far beyond our common ancestry, but that is something we always had. I'll always be grateful for that feeling of belonging he helped me to realize.

Reggie Wilson

The most amazing and gratifying experience for me now is to work and perform with that Sepulveda Junior High Orchestra teacher who made such a difference in my life those 38 years ago. When I see you at the LA Phil where I am now at 17+ year member, or at a studio session recording a score or jingle, it means the world to me to see you there too. It gives me such a feeling of accomplishment. I love to brag that you were my orchestra director in junior high.

Tommy, you really are a remarkable human being. Your talent has taken you far, but your love of teaching music has touched the lives of so many hundreds, if not thousands of aspiring and accomplished musicians. We remember you, and honor you for sharing yourself with us through your teaching.

Elizabeth Baker (MB)

I learned an important teaching concept from Tommy, not from any particular conversation, but after contemplating the instruction I received from him a number of years later. I recalled that, at many lessons with Tommy, I would play my heart out as he listened. At the end he would make a comment (seemingly minor at the time) such as

"hit the keys harder as you play." Since I was expecting all kinds of important guidance and lists of things to do, I felt disappointed and shortchanged. Only later did I realize one of Tommy's great strengths as a teacher. He knows that overcoming one particular technicality or musical idea can open the door to progress on many other levels and, most importantly, what that next step is for each student at any given time. While contemplating my own teaching I recalled this aspect of my lessons with Tommy. When I quit trying to fix everything at once with my students and started to concentrate on the few most important concepts for the moment, there was better success.

James Arnwine (MB)

One of the most profound musical moments I've ever experienced was the first time I played with Giulini in the LA Philharmonic. That was a pretty uplifting situation. It actually happened at the first rehearsal. For this one concert, Roger (Bobo) was sick, and we were doing Pictures at an Exhibition. I'd never worked under Giulini before. I came to the rehearsal with a lot of anticipation, knowing I was playing the Bydlo solo. I can remember as I was sitting there in the orchestra, I could tell from the attitude of the players that this was a different situation entirely. Nobody was talking, and everybody was up on the edge of their chairs. When he stepped on the podium and started conducting, I couldn't believe the way the orchestra sounded! It just sounded incredible! I'd never heard a string sound like that before - it was very uplifting. I remember at the end of the Promenade, he made just a few comments and then looked back at me and said, "Mr. Tuba, just a little bit softer." I knew exactly what he meant. He set the stage

and I knew how I could play from then on. When we got to the Bydlo solo, he looked back at me and he smiled and said, "Sing." He just said one word, and it was like a light went on because I knew exactly what he wanted. So I played the solo, basically the way I thought it should go, and never stopped. When it was over, he looked back and just smiled and nodded and I knew right then that he liked what I had done. But the rest of the rehearsal felt like a concert; it was so inspiring. It was such a thrill to play under him. And just to hear the orchestra play like that, I just felt like I was in another place or something. I just felt like I could do anything. I didn't feel the least bit nervous, though I did feel really keyed up. That went down as one of my all-time great experiences.

Tommy Johnson (from an interview with Steve Oberheu for TubaNews)

As we all know, Tommy loved sports, any and all. He really loved golf and was very good at it. I loved playing golf with Tommy because we would laugh and have a great time, mostly at our playing partners' expense. Tommy is VERY competitive, and when someone would make a comment about his play, he would always say, "The golf Gods will get you for that." Funny thing, he was usually right.

One time playing with Terry Cravens, Tommy announced on the first tee that Terry is the one who'd taught him how to golf. Terry, with a very somber look on his face, said, "I am sorry, guys."

Love you TJ, always...

Rick Baptist

My first impression of you was of a very kind, gracious and patient man. Through the years since finishing my studies at USC, I have realized that you taught me all of the necessary skills needed to become a successful professional tubist. You also showed me the personal and human qualities that are so important in becoming a well-rounded and happy human being.

In lessons, you always had great stories, and they made those classes so interesting and enjoyable. Through the years I have passed along many of those stories to my students and colleagues. Even when I didn't play well in a lesson because I wasn't prepared, you always found a way to encourage and motivate me, and I always left my lessons with something new to think about.

You are not a person of only words, but a person of action and example. Through your unequaled career and your personal life, you have shown and continue to show what excellence at the professional, artistic and human level is all about.

Eric Fritz (MB)

I remember Mr. Johnson conducting the band. I remember playing the USC Trojan fight song, I remember Mr. Johnson talking about music, musicians and conductors. And I remember a few times when we had greatly disappointed Mr. Johnson. I don't remember if it was our behavior (probably), lack of effort (likely) or our playing, but Mr. Johnson was a big guy, and when he wanted you to know he was unhappy, well... that big band room could get awfully quiet. I also remember that Mr. Johnson told the story of a

guest orchestra conductor who made little tiny movements of his baton, compared to their usual conductor. In fact, very tiny motions. Mr. Johnson told how the orchestra was straining to see and catch the little tiny movements - that the small movements created greater attention, focus and cooperation than typical, large gestures. I have told that story many times. And I know, myself, how powerful it can be to lower my voice in a conversation, for example, rather than to raise it.

Robert Bienenfeld (MB)

Several years ago, I had quintuple bypass surgery. It was a hot summer, around August, and I wasn't too keen on getting out in the heat and walking everyday like I was supposed to. Well, every morning for nearly two months, Tommy Johnson or Gene Cipriano (oftentimes both of them) would come by my home in Studio City and walk with me. Pretty amazing considering not only how busy the two of them were, but how far away they lived. After a couple weeks of this, Tommy brought Pat along. On our walk, she proceeded to leave us in the dust. "Are we supposed to keep up with her?" I asked. "No," Tommy said, "She walks. We stroll."

Bill Hughes

Among many of Tommy's character traits that inspire me are his gentle and even-tempered personality, his genuine humility, his hesitation and reluctance to criticize others (coupled with a generous dose of diplomacy when doing so), and his tremendous courage in dealing with the health issues that have threatened both his musical livelihood and his life.

For a period of time while I was in college at USC, I was extremely lucky to be playing alongside Tommy in a large ensemble called the "Los Angeles Brass Society". Former Los Angeles Philharmonic trumpet player, Lester Remsen, led this unique group that performed major works for brass and percussion in church and concert hall settings. One evening during a performance in a local college auditorium, I was thinking to myself what a wonderful happenstance it was for my teacher to be my stand partner on this occasion, and what a shining example he had always been for the disciplines of focusing and concentration. Minutes later, as we rose to accept applause for a piece just concluded, I glanced over at Tommy to make a comment, only to find him wearing a miniature earplug that was attached to a small television set at his feet. One glance at the screen reminded me that the Lakers' playoff season was in full swing, and that my long-time idol had been watching a crucial game during our performance.

Bob Burstein (MB)

The Legend

Ronald Davis studied with Tommy Johnson from 1981-1984 while earning a Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance from USC. Since 1985 he has been Professor of Tuba and Euphonium at the "other USC", the University of South Carolina (Go, Cocks!). The following stories were related by him for inclusion in the program. They were things he either witnessed first-hand or was told about by Tommy.

Star Trek

Jaws wasn't the only time Tommy was late for a major call. Another instance was on a call for one of the Star Trek movies. He arrived at the studio to hear Don Waldrop playing a soaring solo line on bass trombone. As Tommy got his horn out of the bag and took his place, he was rather surprised when Don took the music from his own stand and placed it in front of Tommy. Don said, "I had looked over on Tommy's stand and noticed what a great solo line he had while the bass trombone really did not have anything. I just played his part until he got there." And as it turned out, that was about all of the rehearsal Tommy got on that section before they started recording.

Broughton Concerto

One of Tommy's most impressive solo performances took place at the 1978 Third International Tuba/Euphonium Workshop in Los Angeles. At this event, he premiered the newly orchestrated version of Bruce Broughton's Concerto (Sonata) for Tuba and Wind Ensemble, with a stellar ensemble of studio players and Bruce conducting. This was a conference highlight, but few people in attendance would appreciate the amazing preparation Tommy went through, and how uncompromising he was with his personal performance standards.

Before this conference Tommy did most of his performing on the CC contrabass tuba. He later admitted that at one time he and Roger Bobo considered the F tuba a "chicken horn." Tommy had given a number of performances of the tuba/piano version of the concerto on the CC tuba. During the conference Tommy was very impressed with the performances of several visiting artists on the F tuba, and he chose that moment to give the smaller instrument

One of Hollywood's busiest motion picture and recording artists.

TOMMY JOHNSON

Model 185-5U (CC) (5 valves)—186-5U (CC) (5 valves)
*184-6U (CC) (6 valves)
*(2-bell contra bass trombone attachment)

a fresh evaluation. He borrowed one, took it to his home studio and tested it by recording the second movement of the concerto on his CC tuba, then recording it again on the F tuba. Then he listened and compared. Both performances were good, but to his astute ear, the F tuba recording was better. That was that, case closed. With the premiere performance just days away he decided to relearn the entire work on a different instrument with a completely new set of fingerings. It was just another example of the philosophy he lived by and strived to instill in all of us - you simply do whatever you need to do to sound your best.

Napoleon at the Shrine

Tommy's recovery from Bells palsy was as amazing as the disorder itself was traumatic. One opportunity for him to rehabilitate his face was to play in the orchestra for Napoleon, the epic French four-hour silent movie restored by Francis Ford Coppola, scored by Carmine Coppola, and performed with live orchestra at the Shrine Auditorium. Tommy said the show was ideal because the tuba part was mostly whole notes and half notes, very beneficial for getting his strength back. Anyone who attended the production learned that there was more to the tuba part than long tones. During the scene of the famous meeting on the tennis court, a fairly long sequence, Carmine quoted "The March to the Scaffold" from Symphonie Fantastique with multiple repeats. Tommy played through the section with the octave B-flats four times each show. One ear-witness reported that there was not a single split or missed pitch during the performance he attended. Tommy also said that he would have preferred to play that section on an F tuba, but the pit was too crowded for him to have two tubas, so he did the whole performance on his Mirafone 190 CC.

The Linoleum Tuba Mute

During one of his first studio encounters with Bernard Herrmann, Tommy had several days of recording where a mute was required. Tuba mutes were not commercially available then, so Tommy's father had constructed a serviceable but rather strange-looking one out of plywood and red linoleum. Tommy dutifully brought it with him to the first session. Herrmann questioned him. "What is that?"

"A mute", Tommy answered. Herrmann shouted "NOOOOO! Mutes are METAL!" There were no cues that required the mute that day, but Tommy figured he better get a more acceptable mute before the next session. He took it home and talked to his father, "Can you make one of these out of metal before tomorrow"? "No", he said, "but I can make this one work." His father took the offending mute into the garage and covered the linoleum with metallic silver paint.

The next day Tommy took the disguised mute back into the studio and Herrmann nodded his approval. "That's right, tuba. Mutes are metal!"

The Last Tournament of Roses Parade and Rose Bowl Game

One of Tommy's favorite personal stories was about his senior year at USC and his last Tournament of Roses Parade and Rose Bowl game. He did not play a single note the entire day.

Before the parade, all of the marching bands and other various units lined up on one street, and the rose floats lined up on another street, waiting for the "big merge" onto Colorado Boulevard. The members of the Trojan Band were going through a long stretch of "hurry up and wait" when the director suddenly shouted "Everybody up! We have to step off NOW!" Tommy quickly whipped up his sousaphone. His brand new mouthpiece flew out of the horn, arced over his head and landed squarely in the middle of a fresh pile of horse manure. As luck would have it there were no homeowners out at that time of the morning who could offer a place to wash it off, and no water faucets or garden hoses available. So he flicked off the mess as best he could, put the mouthpiece back on his tuba and marched all six miles of the Rose Parade without playing at all. He said the smell was so bad that he had to move the mouthpiece as far away as possible from his face. O course the other sousaphone players were completely understanding of the situation ("Come on, Johnson! Play!!!) Later at the Rose Bowl he was able to give the mouthpiece a thorough cold water wash in the restroom. But as pristine as it now appeared he still couldn't bring himself to put his mouth on it. So for the entire game and halftime show he continued his "tuba pantomime".

Pomp and Circumstances

One piece that made Tommy uncomfortable was Pomp and Circumstance No. 1, and that was due to an unfortunate incident that took place at the inaugural concert by the Los Angeles Pops Orchestra at the Scottish Rite Temple. The program began with Pomp and Circumstance, followed by the Grieg A minor Piano Concerto, intermission, and then Finlandia. The Lakers were playing a game that evening and Tommy wanted to follow it. After playing Pomp and Circumstance, he set his tuba backstage, went out to the parking lot, got in his car and listened to the game until he saw people coming out for the intermission. As soon as he got backstage Don Waldrop asked him where he had been. Apparently when the stage crew was setting the stage for

the concerto, one of the legs popped off of the grand piano. Not only did they want to put it back into place, but they also wanted to make sure it was secure enough not to come off again and injure the soloist. While they took the time to fix things the orchestra went ahead and performed Finlandia. Don tried going to the parking lot to find Tommy, but it's a huge lot and Don wasn't even sure which car Tommy was driving. Giving up on finding Tommy, Don decided to pick up Tommy's tuba and play the tuba part, which would be missed much more than the bass trombone part. Don did find that Tommy's Mirafone 190 was larger than any tuba he had played before, so he had to deal with a little on-the-job training during the performance.

At this point there was nothing more for Tommy to do than to go to the contractor, collect his check, and go home.

USC Opera at the Shrine

The year after he graduated from USC, Tommy got a call from the conductor of the USC Symphony asking him if he would be willing to come back and play tuba for performances of the USC Opera at the Shrine Auditorium. After going over the schedule Tommy said he could not do it because his junior high band had a concert on the night of one of the performances, and he would be late getting there. The conductor said that he wanted him to play anyway and he could be late that one time.

As it turned out the concert by his school band went smoothly and ended ahead of schedule. Tommy figured that if he hurried, he just might be able to get to the Shrine auditorium just in time for the performance. He drove downtown, entered the basement of the hall and ran up the stairs that exited right in the middle of the orchestra pit. As soon as he hit the top of the stairs, the spotlight came on him and the audience applauded. His entrance was timed precisely between the musicians taking their places and the conductor entering.

Bydlo

Tommy's first encounter with the tuba solo Bydlo from "Pictures at an Exhibition" was early in his career, with the Glendale Symphony and Carmen Dragon conducting. At the first rehearsal, the first few pages of the piece went well on his contrabass tuba. Then he turned the page and there it was, that treacherously high and exposed solo. Tommy said that on the first playing he slid past every single high G-sharp. Maestro Dragon commented, "Tuba, you played that very well. All except for one note." Tommy

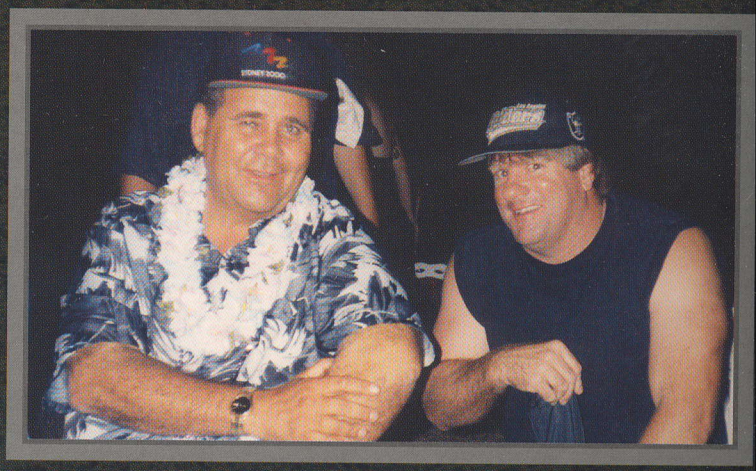
knew he better find a more appropriate instrument before he tackled the solo again. He called George Boujie, who offered the use of his six-valve Alexander F tuba. Tommy borrowed it only to discover that it was a Vienna system F tuba. In Austria it is common for horn players to double on the tuba, so the Vienna system is configured so that the normal first, second and third valves are operated by the LEFT hand. Tommy's solution was to extend his right arm across the front of the tuba and to operate the left-hand valves with his right hand.

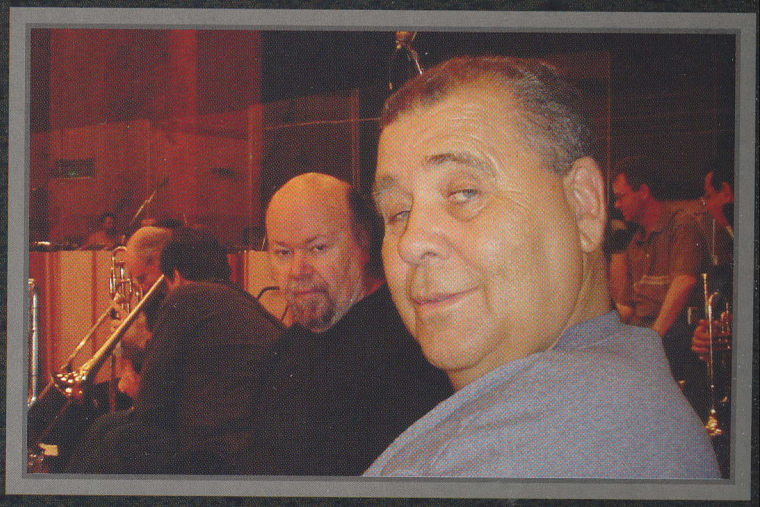
He said that at the concert he played it pretty well.

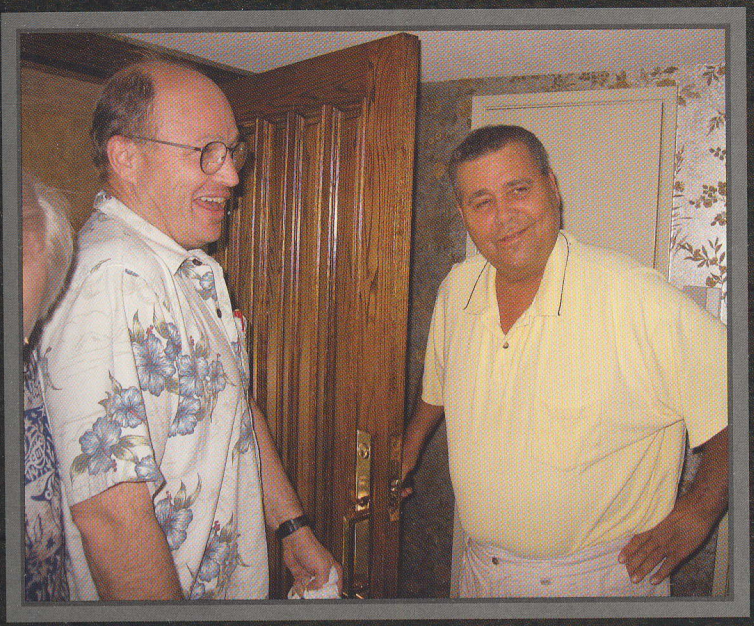
Washington Post March

One thing that never seemed to bother Tommy was conducting. "After all," he said, "you're the guys making all the sound, not me." One conducting assignment was a great challenge to him, so much so that thinking about it years later still caused him to go into a fit of uncontrolled laughter.

One year he took his junior high band to concert festival, and the last work on their program was Washington Post March. For some inexplicable reason, the student playing the cymbals was having a severe anxiety attack over the solo crash at the end of the breakstrain. Tommy said this kid was so stressed out that it was difficult to look at him while they were playing. For most of the march the student stood there, cymbals poised at the ready, waiting for the crucial moment. The march went along, they got to the breakstrain, and Tommy cued the cymbal player. The student closed his eyes, smashed the cymbals together, and instead of a resounding crash it was more of a "phfffft!". The cymbals were hit so solidly together that not only did they not crash, the force created a vacuum seal and they would not come apart. For the rest of the march the poor student desperately struggled to pry the cymbals apart but without success. On the podium Tommy was having a desperate struggle of his own. He could feel his eyes tearing up and the convulsions working in his stomach, but he valiantly kept his composure until the end of the march. When they finally finished he ran off stage, leaned against the proscenium arch, and let the laughter roll.







Farewell, and Happy Journeys...

October 22, 2006
Hi Mr. Johnson,

Well, last week was a heck of a week. You "left the building" and the wake you left behind upended alot of people who knew you. I know upending people's lives is probably not something you wanted to have happen, but your effect on people's lives (even on those who barely knew you) was substantial.

I know you always down-played your popularity. You were pretty good at avoiding the well-deserved recognition people wanted to give you. I think that is called "humility." Even when you got wind that you were going to get a Lifetime Achievement Award at the ITEC convention in Denver this past June, you expressed your relief to me that you would have already left the convention before the award was supposed to be given out. Well, you tried to outrun that award but Kathy made sure it was given to you earlier than was printed in the schedule. Back in May, you and Pat came to celebrate my receiving the prestigious Outstanding Alumnus 2006 award from USC. Everything was OK with you until I had my three minutes in front of a microphone when I had a chance to tell those gathered WHO it was that made my accomplishments possible. You did pretty well sitting through that little speech as I talked about you. It would have been futile to make you a non-entity in my career. You were the elephant in the room... and I meant that in a good way! Sorry. You made a difference in my life. I had to say it.

Back to this past week... Yes, this past week has been really difficult, but enlightening. Tuba players worldwide, many too young to even know what a BankAmericard was, got a chance to hear your "first take" on a commercial jingle for that item. They could also read the story of the circumstances of that recording on one of the tuba websites. Copies of music you actually recorded have shown up on the internet. You would have cringed with the "We are not worthy" sentiments expressed by many either literally or figuratively. Of course, those of us who were your students knew how encouraging and positive you were about the possibilities that we could do that. It was possible to be successful at anything we wanted to do. You had the courage, however, to give us the real-world advice that we should also be able to handle the cards that

are dealt us in the game of life. You told me to believe in fate and that things happen because they are supposed to happen. Your own dealings with "fate," especially with all the physical ailments that came your way, was inspiration beyond words.

I will remember your visits to Chicago to play extra with the orchestra with a lot of smiles. You bought a new set of tails especially to play with the CSO! Also, only conductors and the top-rate soloists who perform with the Chicago Symphony stay at the top hotels. I wonder what was going through those conductors' minds when they spotted you eating breakfast with them in the Dining Room because you and Pat were also staying at the Four Seasons??!!

Remember when we got permission from the Cubs management (via Beth's season ticket status) to visit and get onto Wrigley Field in January, 1996? First stop after our morning rehearsal of "The Rite of Spring" was to fortify. We ended up at Michael Jordan's restaurant. Somehow the macaroni and cheese wasn't quite enough at MJ's, so we detoured to "Portillo's" for one of their famous hot dogs. And the visit to Wrigley... Somehow the gray skies and the leafless ivy along the cold bricks of the outfield on that icy winter day held an aura of magic even for a lifetime Dodgers fan such as yourself. I was excited when you told me sometime this past summer that you would like to come out this next January for another playing of the "Rite." We would have had a lot of fun.

I remember a cassette tape you put together talking about just everyday things that you sent to me when I was in the Israel Philharmonic and away from the USA for the

first time over thirty years ago. It brought me "home" and helped me relax a bit even though I was on the other side of the world. You also arranged for me to buy your own F tuba before I left for Israel since no Miraphone F tubas had come into Sun Valley that entire summer of 1975. That left you without an F tuba in your arsenal for a little while. About that horn you sold me... truthfully, it was not the easiest instrument to play at all, but that made it all the more impressive because that was the horn with which you recorded "Jaws"!! You could make any instrument sound great.

There are a lot of things over these decades I remember, but what I will probably miss most will be our late-night talks. I would call you on the cell phone when I would be in the backyard with the pups after a concert in Chicago and I would catch you at home (it being two hours earlier). Somehow, fifty minutes or an hour and a half would go by and it would seem like no time had passed at all. We would just be talking about life, finding the ultimate mouthpiece,

hilarious times at the studios or on-stage, working with colleagues, dealing with students' playing problems. You kept (ever so gently) telling me about the latest gadgets and technology, as in using the computer to call people on the phone, the latest digital cameras, high-speed connections, etc., etc. You always held out hope that I would somehow make it to the "information super-highway" as opposed to the "information dirt road" where I comfortably reside. Considering how busy you were, I have no idea how you managed to come up with musical arrangements, digital soundtracks of piano and orchestral accompaniments of tuba solos and all the other stuff you managed to put together for your current students while teaching and keeping your busy recording schedule.

I keep trying to remind myself what you said to me a couple of times over the past couple of years, that you have been really satisfied with how your life has gone even if it were to end relatively soon. You led a simple life; not a simplistic one. It was based on doing the right things, being a kind person and being an awesome musician who just happened to play the tuba. As much as I wish you not be away, I feel lucky for the time we had together and for the difference you made in my life. After all, it was "fate." That is what you taught me.

Happy Journeys,

Gene Pokorny

The family would like to thank USC for providing Bovard Auditorium and its staff for this occasion.

Special thanks to Rick Baptist, Terry Cravens, Ross de Roche, Gary Grant, Malcolm McNab, Beth Mitchell, Jim Self and Steve Taylor. Thanks also to Kathy and Dave Amason, and Edward Martinez, for designing and producing this program.

This program is merely the beginning of a larger project to chronicle Tommy's life and legacy online. He was many things to many people, and we need your help in telling his story. In the coming months, we'll be assembling words, pictures, audio and video for www.tommyjohnson.org, and we'd like to solicit your input for this endeavor. There will also be information on the website concerning the performance scholarship established in Tommy's honor at USC.

If you'd like to contribute a remembrance, picture, etc., please contact us via email at info@tommyjohnson.org, or call Dave Amason at 949-273-6099.

John Thomas Johnson
1935-2006